

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

STANDING HEARING OFFICER DIRECTIVE

DOCKET NO. 2022-89-G ORDER NO. 2022-47-H

MAY 12, 2022

STANDING HEARING OFFICER: C. Jo Anne Wessinger Hill

DOCKET DESCRIPTION:

Application of Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Incorporated for Adjustment of Rates and Charges (*This Filing May Include a Request for a Rate Increase*)

MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Petition to Intervene of South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”) filed on April 4, 2022.

CHIEF HEARING OFFICER’S ACTION:

This matter comes before the Hearing Officer on the Petition to Intervene of DCA in this Docket. The Petition has been timely filed and within the deadline to file a Petition to Intervene of June 21, 2022, as stated in the Notice of Filing and Public Hearings.

After it has been determined that the Petition to Intervene has been timely filed, the next question for the Commission is to determine whether or not the petitioning party or parties have clear factual support or grounds for the proposed intervention. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 37-6-604(C), DCA “may intervene as a party to advocate for the interest of consumers before the Public Service Commission and appellate courts in such matters as the Consumer Advocate deems necessary and appropriate.” S.C. Code Ann. § 37-6-604(C) (2018). Additionally, subsection (A)(1) of Section 57-6-604 also provides that the Consumer Advocate may “provide legal representation of the consumer interest before state and federal regulatory agencies which undertake to fix rates or prices for consumer products or services.” S.C. Code Ann. § 37-6-604(A)(1) (2018). In this capacity that DCA petitions to intervene as a formal party of record in Docket No. 2022-89-G.

S.C. Regs. 103-825A(3) requires that parties filing a Petition to Intervene in a matter pending before the South Carolina Public Service Commission must set forth clearly and concisely:

- (a) The facts from which the nature of the petitioner's alleged right or interest can be determined;
- (b) The grounds of the proposed intervention;
- (c) The position of the petitioner in the proceeding.

The Commission opened this proceeding on the request of Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Incorporated. DCA is statutorily authorized to intervene as a party of record in matters before the Commission to advocate for the public interest. DCA further states that it “works to avoid

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excessive, inadequate, and unwarranted rate increases; however, a position has not yet been fully developed on this matter” by DCA.

From the discussion and assertions in DCA’s Petition, this Hearing Officer holds that they have satisfied all of the criteria for intervention stated in South Carolina Code Section 58-6-604, as well as the Regulation. The Petitioners’ interest in these matters can clearly be discerned, as can the grounds for the intervention. Although the Petitioners did not state a position, they noted that they have not fully developed one, but reserves the right to set forth a position during the course of the proceeding, which is satisfactory. Further, the Petition to Intervene was timely filed and there are no objections to the intervention. Accordingly, the Petition to Intervene of DCA is hereby granted in this Docket.

This ends the Hearing Officer’s Directive.